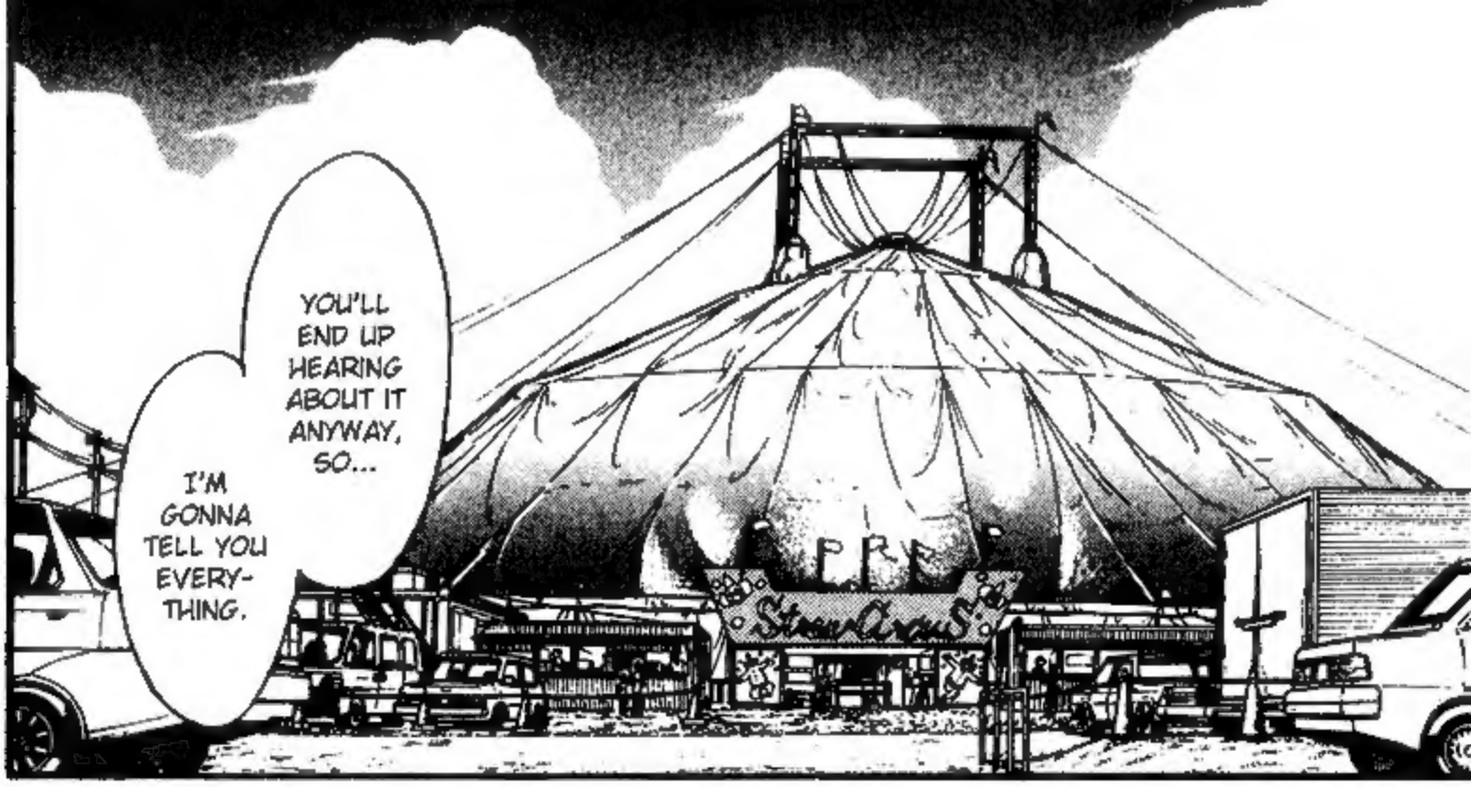
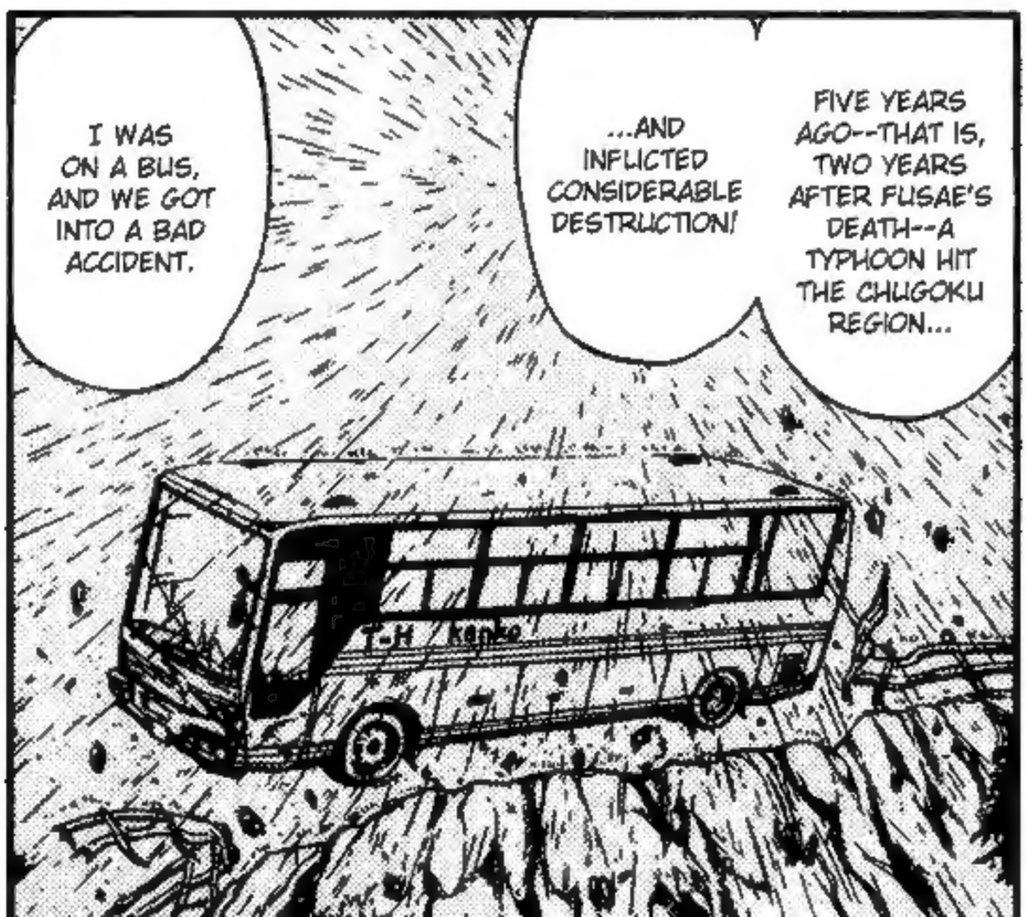
ACT V: CIRCUS * MASARU AT THE CIRCUS
"PART TWO"

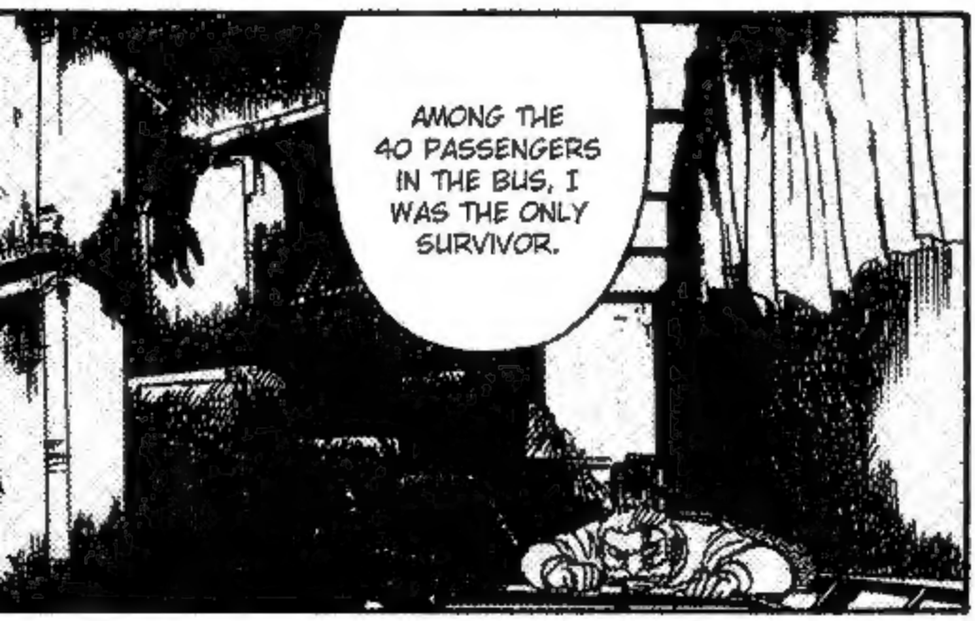

I'M GONNA TELL YOU EVERY-THING.
YOU'LL END UP HEARING ABOUT IT ANYWAY, SO...
PRESS
Stray Dogs

...BUT AS A "MAN EATER"!
TO MANY PEOPLE, I'M KNOWN NOT AS A "STONE EATER..."
BLA BLA
BLA BLA


I WAS ON A BUS, AND WE GOT INTO A BAD ACCIDENT.
...AND INFLICTED CONSIDERABLE DESTRUCTION!
FIVE YEARS AGO--THAT IS, TWO YEARS AFTER FUSAE'S DEATH--A TYPHOON HIT THE CHUGOKU REGION...

OH?
YOU MEAN... YOU EAT... PEOPLE?!

I ONLY HAPPENED TO BE THERE BECAUSE I WAS ACCOMPANYING SOMEONE. THE BUS WAS FULL OF REGULAR PASSENGERS ...
THE BUS VEERED OFF THE ROAD BECAUSE OF THE WIND AND FELL INTO A RAVINE...


AMONG THE 40 PASSENGERS IN THE BUS, I WAS THE ONLY SURVIVOR.

NO...
SO THERE WAS NOBODY ELSE FROM YOUR CIRCUS?

ALAS, I WAS THE ONLY ONE!
AND YET, I STILL TRIED TO FIND OTHER SURVIVORS...
BOTH OF MY LEGS WERE BROKEN ...

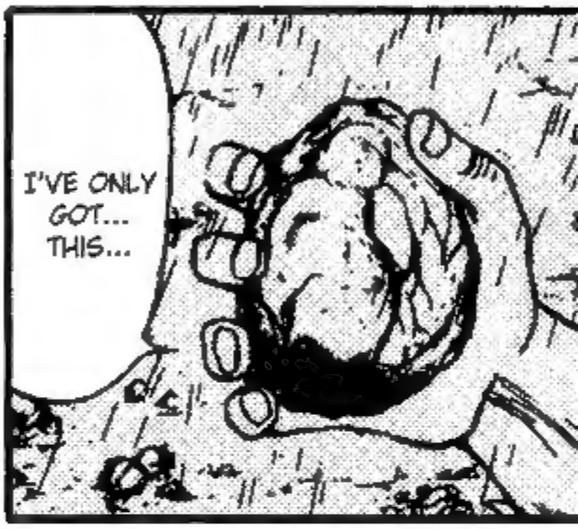
WOOMM

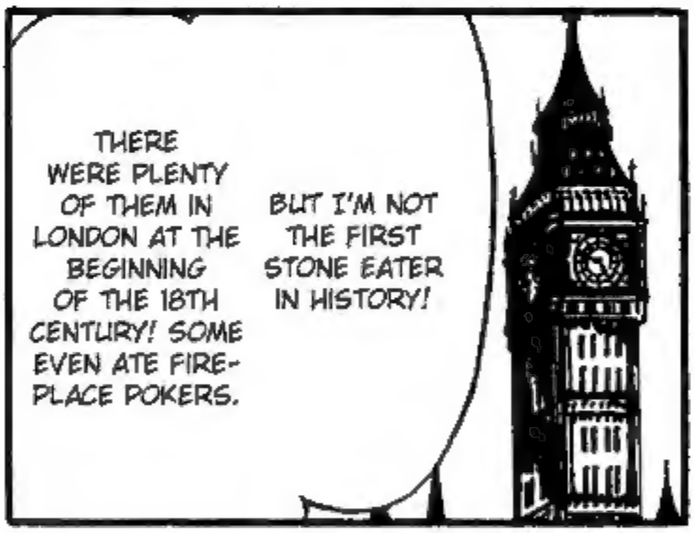
I WAS TOTALLY EXHAUSTED
AND JUST SAT THERE FOR FIVE DAYS.
I FOUND A PLACE UNDER A ROCKY OUT-CROPPING TO PROTECT MYSELF FROM THE RAIN... I COULDN'T MOVE ANYMORE.

SCHHH

SO... HUNGRY ...
FLIC
FLOC

CRUNCH
CRUNCH


I'VE ONLY GOT... THIS...


THERE WERE PLENTY OF THEM IN LONDON AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 18TH CENTURY! SOME EVEN ATE FIRE-PLACE POKERS.
BUT I'M NOT THE FIRST STONE EATER IN HISTORY!

YES! I HAD MADE MY NAME AS A STONE EATER.
SO... YOU ATE STONES?!

...ME?
DO YOU DO THAT TOO?

A MAN NAMED BATTALIA ATE NINE POUNDS OF ROCK EVERY DAY. PEOPLE SAID THAT EVERY THREE WEEKS, HE LET OUT A LOT OF SAND!
HE CLAIMED HE LIKED THE TASTE OF ROCKS!
STONE E
The only on
Francis Battalia

A STONE DOESN'T HAVE ANY NUTRITIONAL VALUE!
BUT TO FIGHT HUNGER... I ATE SOME...
AND I SURVIVED ...
I DID IT ONLY FOR MY ACT!
I HAVE STRONG TEETH AND AN OUTSTANDING DIGESTIVE SYSTEM, THAT'S ALL! I'VE NEVER LIKED THE TASTE OF STONES ...
MANY LANDSLIDES HAD BLOCKED THE ROADS AND DELAYED THEIR EFFORTS TO GET THERE.
THE RESCUE TEAMS FOUND OUR BUS FIVE DAYS LATER...
HOW DID MR. NAKAMACHI MANAGE TO SURVIVE IN THIS RAVINE WITH NO FOOD AROUND?!
THE PRESS STARTED TALKING ABOUT ME.
I WAS THE ONLY SURVIVOR.
I LEARNED THIS MUCH LATER...
...HAD BEEN EATEN BY WILD ANIMALS.
MOST OF THE BODIES OF THE OTHER PASSENGERS ...

DESPITE THE MANY EXPERTS' OPINIONS TO THE CONTRARY, THE GOSSIP MAGAZINES WENT WILD WITH IT.

Amazing!!!
Stranded stone eater survives road accident by feeding on the bodies of other victims!!!

MR. NAKAMACHI

HORROR AT THE CIRCUS

BECAUSE OF THAT...

I TOOK IT BADLY...

I COULDN'T STAND ANSWERING THE REPORTERS WHEN EVERYBODY HAD OBVIOUSLY MADE UP THEIR MINDS.

PEOPLE SIMPLY ASSUMED THAT IF I COULD EAT STONES, I COULD EAT PEOPLE AS WELL!

YOU COULDN'T PROVE THAT THE PASSENGERS HAD BEEN EATEN BY ANIMALS?

THE REPUTATION OF THE NAKAMACHI CIRCUS SUFFERED A LOT. BECAUSE OF ME, OUR AUDIENCE BECAME SPARSE AT BEST.

NAKAMACHI CIRCUS BLAMED

VICTIMS' FAMILIES ANGRY

A STONE EATER

NAKAMACHI CIRCUS: A GATHERING OF KILLERS?

LOGRE LIVING

...I BECAME VIOLENT AND WAS ARRESTED.

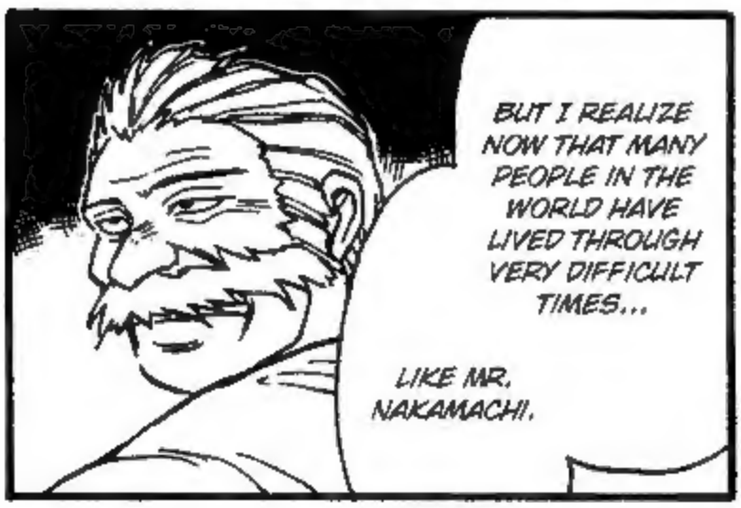
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THE SHOW IS ABOUT TO START!!!

DING

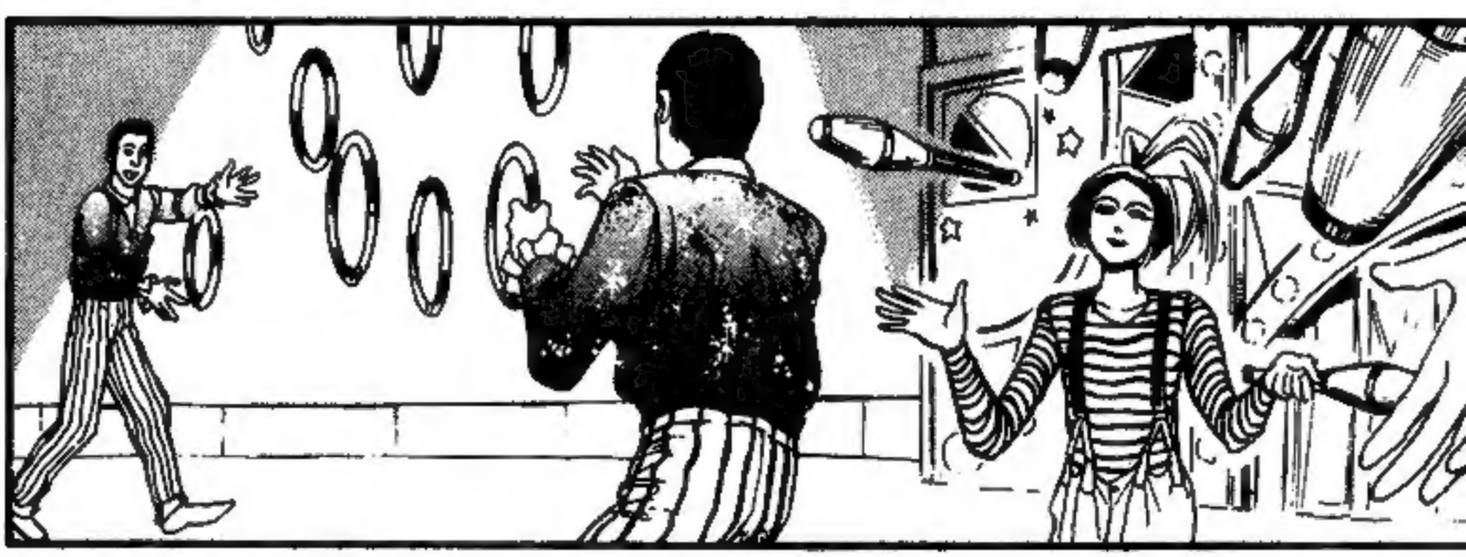
BUT ONE DAY, THERE WAS NOBODY LEFT.

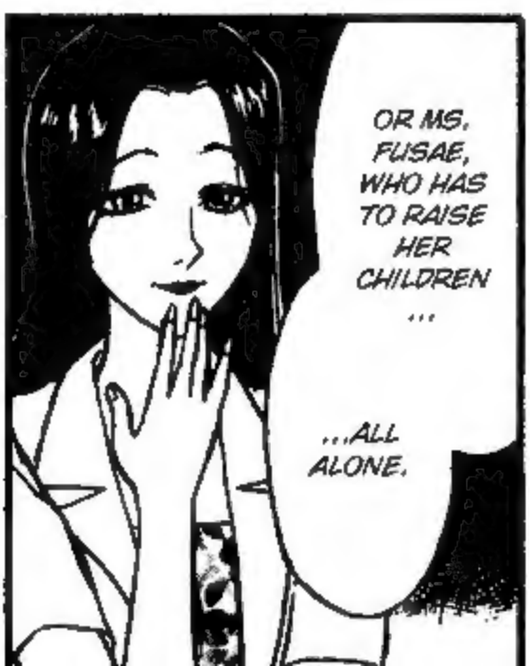
BEFORE, SPECTATORS CAME IN THRONGS...

ACCORDING TO THE MEDIA, I WAS A DANGEROUS PSYCHOPATH, A CRIMINAL... PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF MY CIRCUS WAS A CATASTROPHE!
ONE AFTER ANOTHER, OUR ARTISTS LEFT US ...
AND I COULDN'T DO ANY-THING ABOUT IT.
IN SHORT...
THEY TOLD ME: "NAKAMACHI, WE FEEL THAT YOU NO LONGER HAVE THE RIGHT TO WORK IN THE CIRCUS WORLD!"
...
PEOPLE IN THE CIRCUS WORLD ARGUED PASSIONATELY ABOUT ME...
...AND I ENDED UP BEING BANNED FROM EVERY SINGLE ENTER-TAINMENT SYNDICATE.
SAH
YOU WON'T BE DISAP-POINTED, MASARU!
IT'S STARTING!
AH!
BUT...
I REALIZED THAT IF I WANNA PUT TOGETHER A NEW CIRCUS, I SHOULD EXPECT MANY OBSTACLES!
TODAY, WHEN I TALKED TO MITSU'USHI,


BUT I REALIZE NOW THAT MANY PEOPLE IN THE WORLD HAVE LIVED THROUGH VERY DIFFICULT TIMES...
LIKE MR. NAKAMACHI.

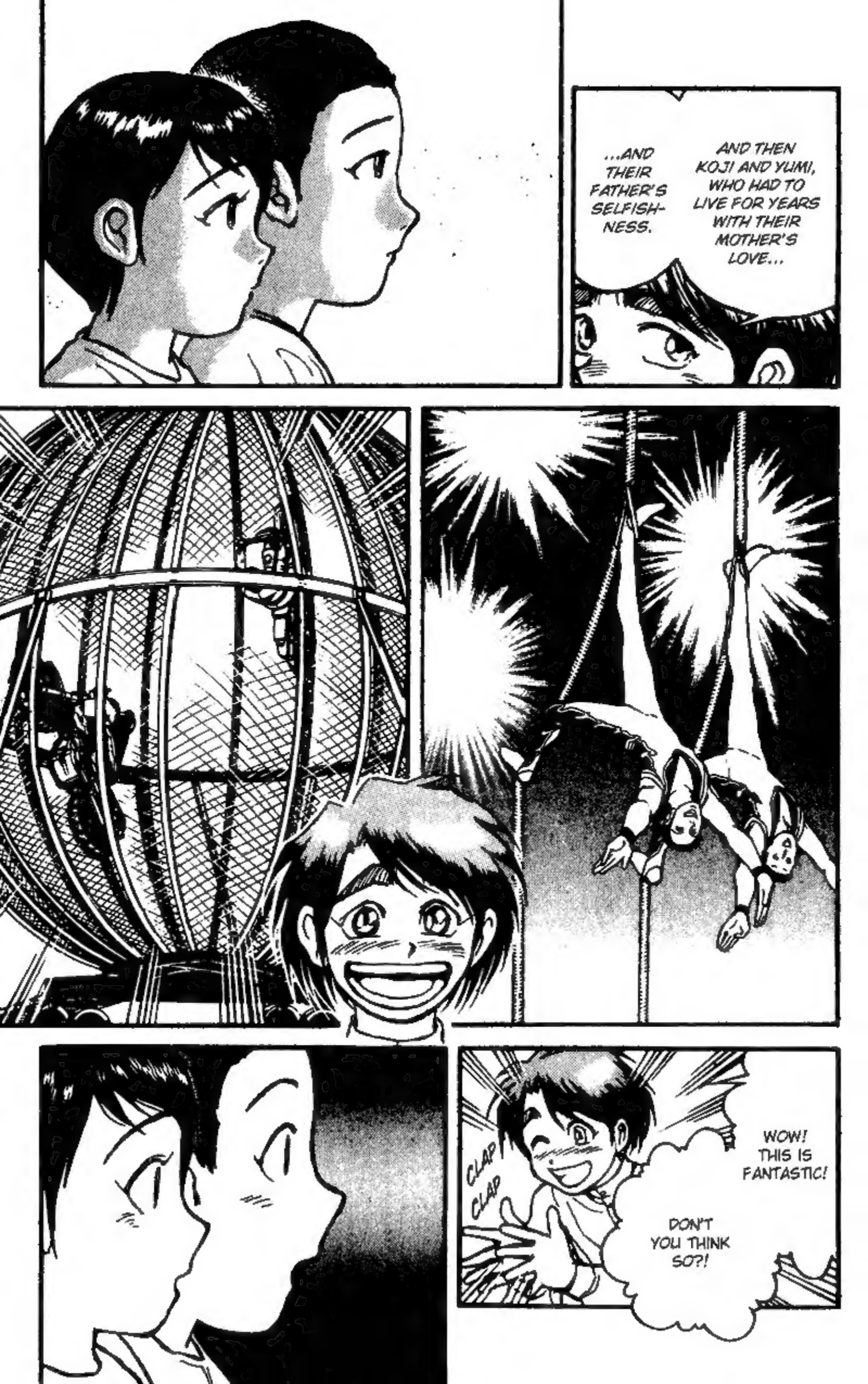
UNTIL I MET MR. NAKA-MACHI...
...I THOUGHT I WAS THE ONLY ONE TO HAVE LIVED THROUGH SUCH HARD TIMES.



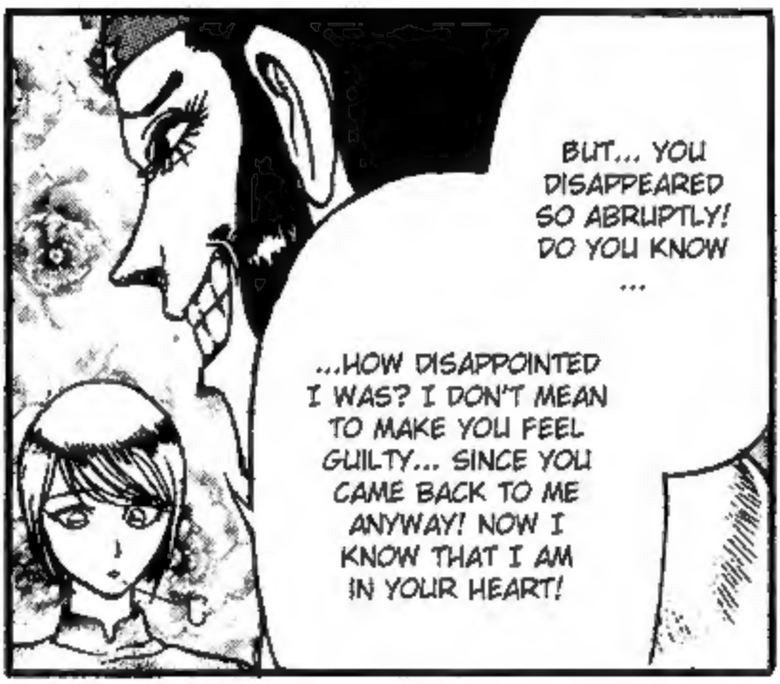

OR MS. FUSAE, WHO HAS TO RAISE HER CHILDREN ...
...ALL ALONE.

TARANDA ...

NORI...
HIRO...


...AND THEIR FATHER'S SELFISHNESS.
AND THEN KOJI AND YUMI, WHO HAD TO LIVE FOR YEARS WITH THEIR MOTHER'S LOVE...
CLAP CLAP
WOW! THIS IS FANTASTIC!
DON'T YOU THINK SO?!

YOU AND NAOTA ARE GONNA BE ABLE TO SHOW US WHAT YOU CAN DO!
SHIROGANE, I'M TRUSTING YOU!

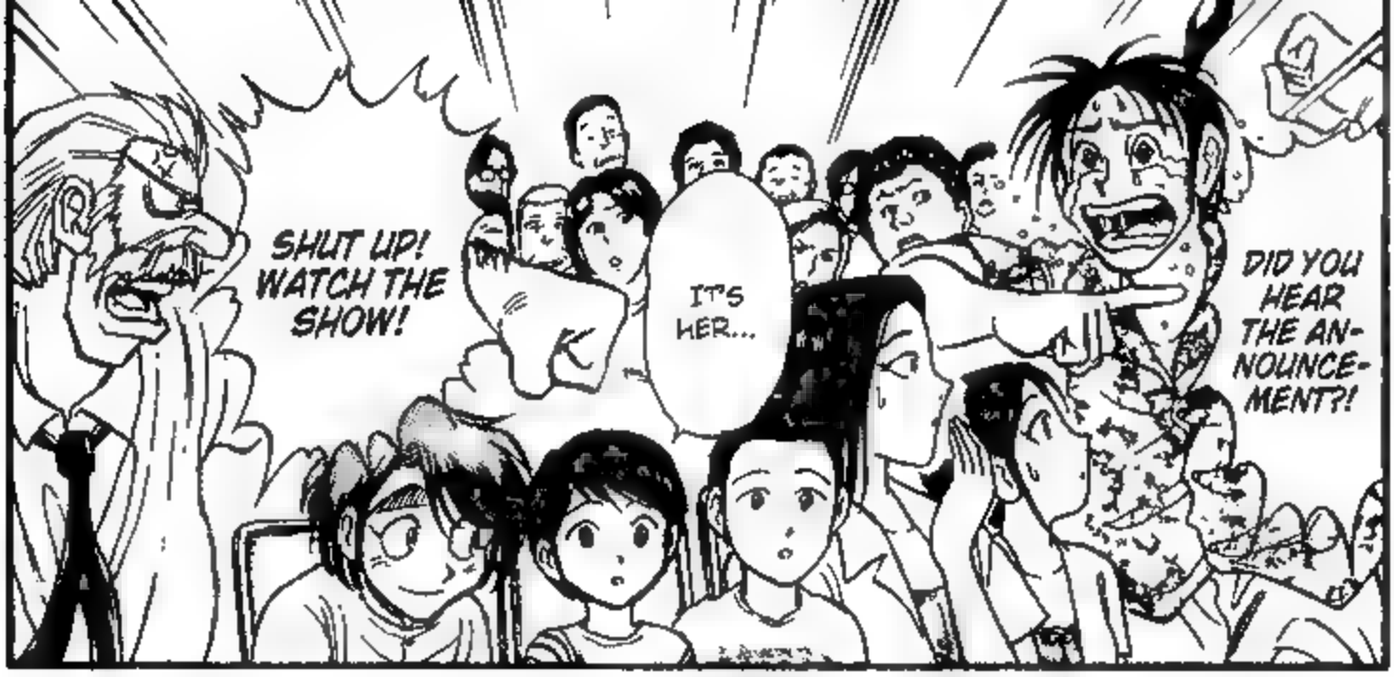

BUT... YOU DISAPPEARED SO ABRUPTLY! DO YOU KNOW ...
...HOW DISAPPOINTED I WAS? I DON'T MEAN TO MAKE YOU FEEL GUILTY... SINCE YOU CAME BACK TO ME ANYWAY! NOW I KNOW THAT I AM IN YOUR HEART!

YES.
THREE MONTHS AGO, YOU AND I WERE STARS!

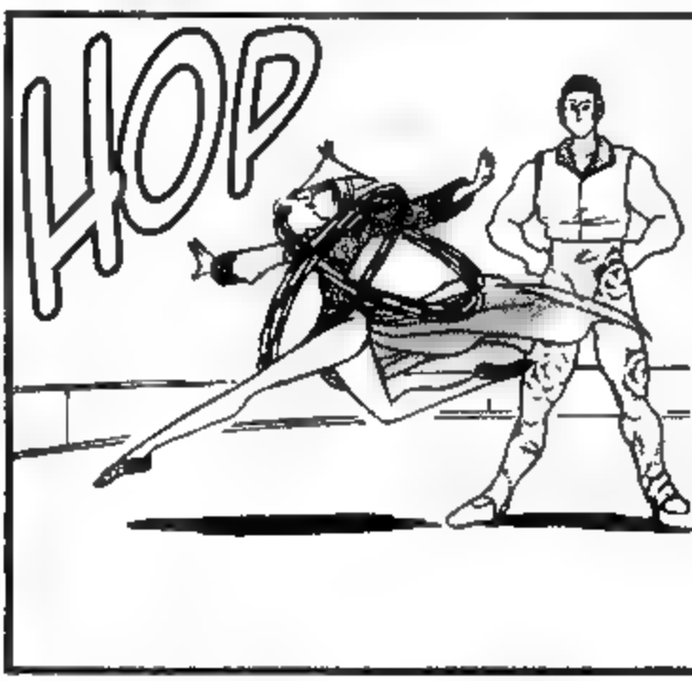
THE PEOPLE IN OUR CIRCUS CALLED YOU THE "ICE QUEEN" BECAUSE YOU ALWAYS KEPT YOUR DISTANCE FROM OTHERS. BUT I KNOW THAT FOR THE LOVE OF YOUR LIFE, YOUR HEART CAN BE A BLAZING FURNACE!
AND I KNOW THAT TODAY, YOU'VE DECIDED TO RETURN MY FEELINGS!

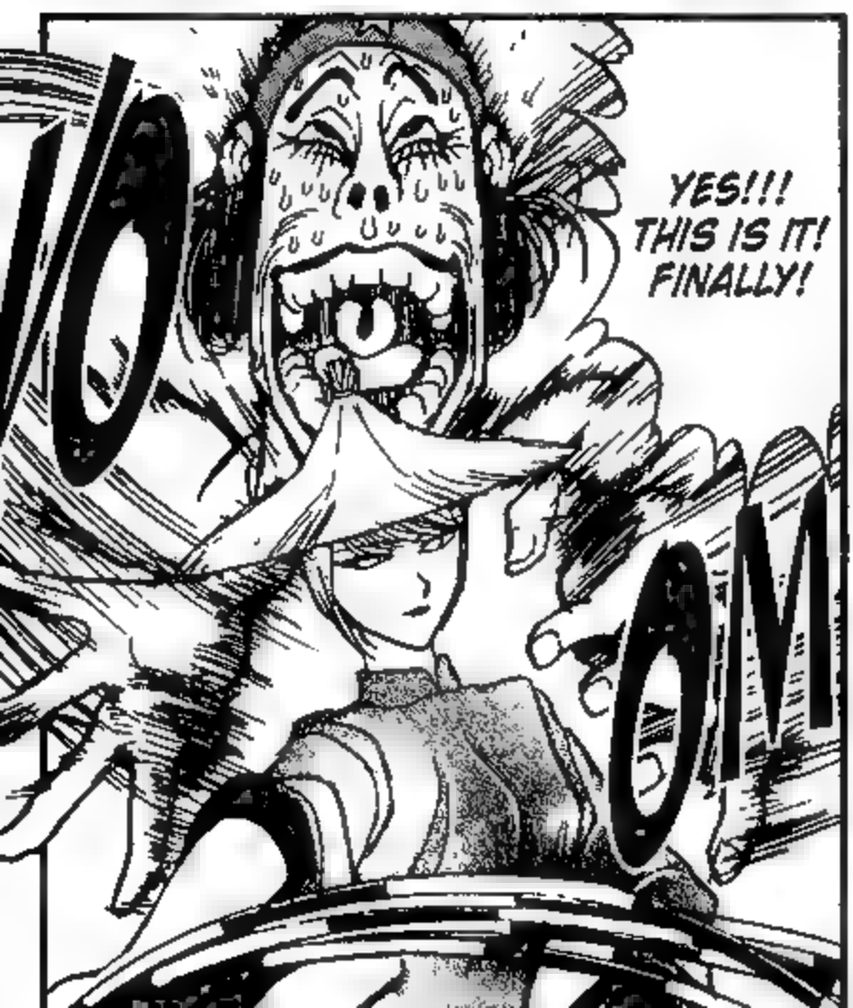
I'M GOING TO CHANGE OUR NUMBER.

HAHA!!! SHIRO-GANE!!! ARE YOU SERIOUS ?!
IF YOU MANAGE TO DO SO, I WILL RETURN YOUR SO-CALLED "FEELINGS"!
TRY TO HUG ME REALLY HARD DURING OUR PERFORMANCE ...
VERY MUCH SO.
AAHH
NAOTA AND MISS SHIROGANE !!!
NOW HERE IS AN ACROBATICS NUMBER...
...BY THE STRAW CIRCUS' MOST BEAUTIFUL COUPLE!


SHUT UP! WATCH THE SHOW!
IT'S HER...
DID YOU HEAR THE ANNOUNCEMENT?!

IF I HUG HER...
... SHIROGANE WILL FINALLY BE MINE!


HOP


YES!!! THIS IS IT! FINALLY!
OOM

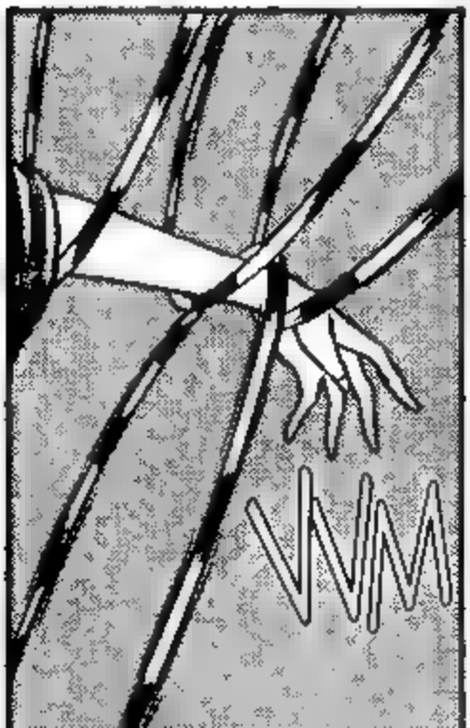
I THINK SHIROGANE PROMISED THAT IDIOT SOMETHING...

HA
HA
TUG
?
FLAP
BUT...
TAN

FLAP
ZAN
HOP

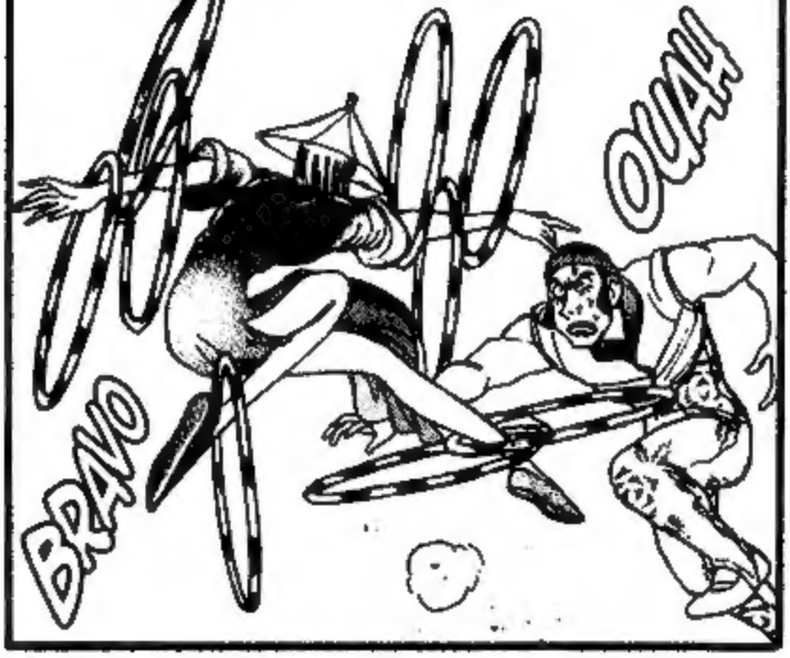
HEY, MACHO MAN! LOOKS LIKE YOUR GIRLFRIEND DOESN'T LIKE YOU ANYMORE!

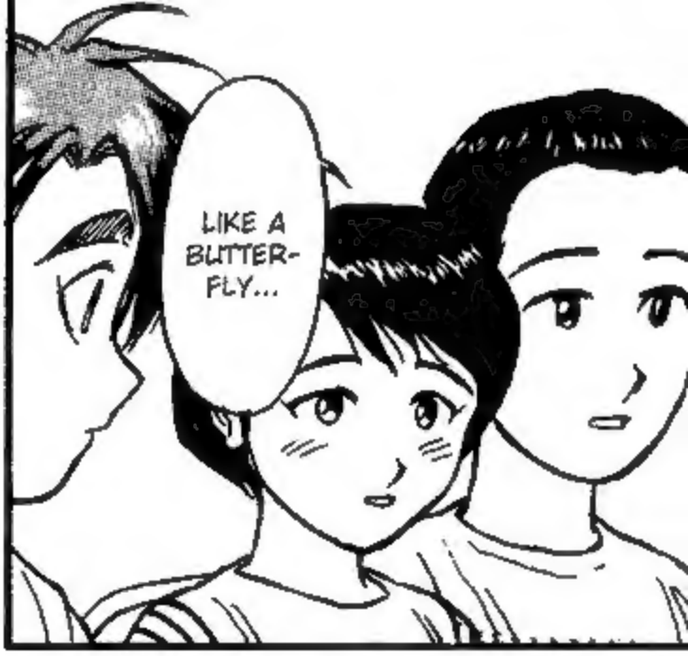
I DON'T KNOW WHY, BUT I LOVE THIS NUMBER!


MM

HA
HA

IT'S A VERY DIFFICULT TECHNIQUE THAT EMPHASIZES HER EXTREME FLEXIBILITY.
WOW! HOW CAN SHE HANDLE SO MANY HOOPS AT A TIME? SHE WON'T BE ABLE TO ESCAPE ANYMORE!


BRAVO
OUT!


LIKE A BUTTER-FLY...

YOUR "FEELINGS"
SHIROGANE!
I WILL RETURN ...

WAIT!
REALLY HARD...
IF YOU DO SO...

"TRY TO HUG ME...
HAA...
HAA...

NOOO

DAAAHHH

AS IS MISS FUSAE...
NORI IS LAUGHING OUT LOUD ...
EVEN MR. NAKAMACHI IS LAUGHING HEARTILY...
AS FOR KOJI AND YUMI, THEIR EYES ARE SPARKLING...

...IS REALLY AMAZING!!
THE CIRCUS ...

YOURRAAAA!!